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SUBJECT: REBEL LEADER RETURNS TO BRAZZAVILLE

11. (U) The leader of the "Ninja" rebel group, Frederic Bintsamou, known as Pasteur Ntumi, is set to return to Brazzaville on Monday, September 10 to assume his new post as a presidential advisor promoting peace in the aftermath of the civil war. Accompanying Ntumi will be at least 100 ex-combatants who serve as his personal bodyguard. There are an estimated 700 ex-combatants who have remained active in the Pool region south of Brazzaville since the cessation of conflict in 2002, occasionally conducting roadblocks and highway robberies of large lorries and trains traveling between Point Noire and Brazzaville.

12. (SBU) RSO has reservations about the general security situation in Brazzaville with the introduction of the "Ninjas". The "Ninjas" are a group of rebel soldiers typical of many like groups in Western Africa in that they are primarily young, heavily armed, poorly trained and undisciplined. RSO has witnessed the "Ninjas" in action during a peace ceremony held in Kinkala, a village in the Pool region, while accompanying the ambassador. RSO noted a lack of muzzle discipline and suspected drug use. Some security forces confided in RSO that they were worried about the discipline of the "Ninjas" and feared that any small disturbance or perceived threat to Ntumi could have escalated very quickly.

13. (U) RSO has discussed potential changes in the security environment with post officials and other security professionals in Brazzaville. All parties will monitor and assess the security situation as it develops.

14. (U) Point of contact is RSO Stephen Lesniak, cell 011 242 526 3556.

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